A Biography of Hadhrat Mufti Abdur Raheem Lajpori رحمه الله

Geographical Background

Lajpor

Lajpor is a town in the district of Surat, located approximately 12 miles south of the city of Surat. The town has a large Muslim population and had always been the home of many pious servants of Allaah.

Rander

This is a town close to Surat, which hosts two large Daarul Ulooms. The first is Daarul Uloom Ashrafiyyah, which was established in the year 1286 A.H. (1870) and the second is Daarul Uloom Husayniyyah, which was established in 1335 A.H. (1919). Many pious people are buried in the Rander graveyard, including a Taabi'ee رحمه الله.

Birth

Hadhrat Mufti Sayyid Abdur Raheem Lajpori Sahib رحمه الله was born in the Motwar suburb of Nosari in the month of Shawwaal 1321 A.H. (3 December 1902).

Lineage

Together with his profound knowledge and piety, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was also blessed with the honour of belonging to the family of Rasulullaah ρ. His lineage is traced back to Hadhrat Ali τ.

His Father

His father was Hadhrat Moulana Abdul Kareem Lajpori رحمه الله, who was born in Lajpor in the year 1301 A.H. (1884). He studied up to Mishkaat in Lajpor, but, due to domestic problems, he was unable to travel to a Daarul Uloom to complete the *Dore Hadith* year. He therefore did jot have a formal degree. Hadhrat Moulana Abdul Kareem رحمه الله taught initially in Lajpor, but then proceeded to teach in Madrasah Muhammadiyya in the Motwar suburb of Nosari. Here he taught for many years and also served as the Imaam of the Jaami Masjid for twelve years.

Realising that one of the great responsibilities of scholars is to guide the Ummah through lectures, Hadhrat Moulana رحمه الله played a role in this field of religious instruction. In fact, during the month of Rabee-ul-Awwal, he would deliver three lectures a day. He would travel to Sacheen in the mornings, where he would deliver his first lecture. After lunch, he would travel back to Nowsari, where he would deliver a lecture after the Zuhr salaah. His third lecture for the day would then take place after Isha in the town of Jalaalpur. Hadhrat Moulana رحمه الله was an eloquent speaker and because he had committed much of the *Mathnawi* to memory, he was able to sing many parts of it during his lectures as and when appropriate.

Hadhrat Moulana رحمه الله had a close relationship with many leading Ulema of his time such as Hadhrat Moulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Shabbier Ahmad Uthmaani رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Badre Aalam Mirati رحمه الله, Mufti Ateequr Rahmaan Uthmaani رحمه الله and Hadhrat Moulana Husayn رحمه الله who was the founder of Daarul Uloom Husayniyyah in Randher. These personalities would often stay at Hadhrat Moulana رحمه الله's residence in Nowsari, especially when travelling from Delhi to Dhabel.

When he fell ill during the last days of his life, Hadhrat Mufti Abdur Raheem رحمه الله brought his father to Randher so that he could receive treatment and also to be of service to him. However, this great soul was summoned by Allaah on the 26th of Jumaadal Ukhra 1393 (27 July 1973). It was Hadhrat Mufti Abdur Raheem رحمه الله who led the Janaazah salaah and lay his father to rest in the famous cemetery of Randher.

Hadhrat Moulana left behind four sons:

1. Hadhrat Mufti Sayyid Abdur Raheem رحمه الله, about whose life we are discussing
2. Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Abdul Haqq Qadri رحمه الله, who was one of the leading members of the Jamiatul Ulema of India and very active in politics. He passed away in Dhul Hijjah 1418 A.H. (April 1998).
3. Haafidh Sayyid Abdul Hakeem رحمه الله: He was an excellent Haafidh and Aamil, who spent his life in Nowsari.
4. Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Abdul Ahad Kowthari Qadri رحمه الله: Hadhrat Moulana was born in 1928 in Nowsari and was a graduate of Jaamea Husayniyyah in Randher. He was a famous writer in Gujarat and a prolific researcher. One of the many outstanding attributes Allaah blessed him with was his powerful pen, before which evil and her consorts shuddered. Amongst his many writings was "The Muslim's Diary", a book which Muslims need to read, especially in today's times of ignorance. He had an extensive knowledge of global politics and would read the newspapers every day. He passed away on the 30th of Jumaadal Ukhra 1415 (4 December 1994) and is buried in the Leicester cemetery in England.

His Education

Hadhrat Mufti Sayyid Abdur Raheem رحمه الله received his initial grounding education from Moulana Sayyid Ibraheem (passed away 1329 A.H.) in Lajpor. As a young boy, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله also used to recite Qur'aan with other little boys in the Jaami Masjid when the great sage Hadhrat Moulana Soofi Sulaymaan Lajpori رحمه الله heard him reciting. The saint was so impressed by the boy's excellent recitation that he asked the young Abdur Raheem to recite to hi every day.

When his Ustaadh Hadhrat Moulana Ibraheem رحمه الله passed away, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله went to the village of Mota Waracha, where he studied the Qur'aan under the tutelage of his paternal uncle Haafidh Sayyid Husaamud Deen Qadri رحمه الله (passed away 1343 A.H.). although he stayed there for only two years, the hospitality of the people of the village left and indelible impression on Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله. The humid climate of the village did however have an ill effect on his uncle's health. Learning of this, the Sheikhul Hadith of Daarul Uloom Ashrafiyyah in Randher summoned him to teach Hifdh in the Daarul Uloom and to be the Imaam at a Masjid there. Consequently, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله went with his uncle to stay in Randher. He then enrolled at the Daarul Uloom and completed Hifdh in the year 1339 A.H. While

staying in Lajpor, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had received Gujarati education for a year to two.

The Wrestler

The verses of the Qur'aan and several Ahadeeth exhort Muslims to be brave, strong and ever prepared for Jihaad. As a true follower of the teachings of Allaah and Rasulullaah ρ, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was an expert wrestler and taught wrestling to the youngsters in Lajpor and in Randher. He recounts the time when a wrestler from Randher arrived in Lajpor and asked some of the youngsters whom it was who taught them wrestling. "Abdur Raheem" they replied. The burly wrestler then asked them to call their teacher to challenge him. When the man insisted on challenging only Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله , the two met in the ring.

Describing the incident, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله writes, "I made du'aa to Allaah to preserve my dignity and not let me be humiliated before my students. He was standing opposite me when I got into the ring, beating his palms on his forearms to frighten me. I stepped forward when he did and we watched each other closely before leaping at one another. I grabbed him above the waist from the front, lifted him up and them slammed him to the ground so hard that he was forced to concede defeat. He had now lost courage, while I was filling with it. 'The wrestling bout has to take place three times,' I told him. He was, however, not prepared to even go the second round."

An Interesting Incident

After completing Hifdh, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله stayed in Lajpor, where he continued his studies together with assisting in farming. He studied some Qiraa'ah under his Ustaadh Qaari Abdus Sattaar رحمه الله, whose beautiful style of reciting the Qur'aan was copied by Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله and many other Qurraa. An interesting incident concerning the Qaari Sahib needs to be mentioned here. It once happened that Hadhrat Qaari Sahib and Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله travelled to Randher. Because had always lauded Hadhrat Qaari Sahib's recitation, the people insisted that he lead the Isha salaah at the Jaami Masjid. However, to their disappointment, Hadhrat Qaari Sahib's recitation was straightforward and simple. After the people expressed their

disappointment to Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله , he mentioned it to his Ustaadh. Hadhrat Qaari Sahib then told Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله that whenever he led the salaah in another Masjid, he ensured that he never recited better than the local Imaam so that the people would not lose respect for their Imaam.

His Fervour for learning from a Young Age

How did Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله start learning under the eminent Qaari Abdus Sattaar Sahib رحمه الله? Qaari Sahib رحمه الله used to teach a student of his every day after Asr at the pond of the Masjid. Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was still a young boy at the time and was keen to learn as well, but was unable to afford the tutorship fees. He therefore sat nearby each day and listened attentively to the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله teaching the boy. He repeated to himself everything the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله recited and in a short period of time he was able to recite the Qur'aan exactly as the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله used to recite.

One day, the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله said to his student, "Now you read for me today. Let's see what you have learnt after all these days." When the boy recited, the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله became extremely angry and shouted, "After such a long time you have not even managed to master my style of reading." Seeing the young Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله sitting nearby, Qaari Sahib رحمه الله said, "Have you learnt anything after sitting here for so long?" Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله eagerly sprang forward and said, "Yes, I have." When the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله asked him to start reciting, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله recited exactly as the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله recited. The Qaari Sahib رحمه الله became so happy that he insisted that Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله join his class every day.

Throughout his life, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله always recited exactly as the famous Qaari Sahib رحمه الله used to recite and when hearing Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله recite, people actually thought that it was the Qaari Sahib رحمه الله himself.

As an Imaam

While he was still a student, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had a keen interest in Masaa'il and avidly studied *Behisti Zewar* and *Ghaayatul Awtaar* even as a child. People learnt about this and would ask him for answers to their questions. In addition to this, his fluent and melodious

recitation of the Qur'aan prompted the people of Nowsari to appoint him as Imaam of their Jaami Masjid in the year 1340 A.H. (1922).

His Studies in Randher

Two cloth merchants from Randher once arrived in Nowsari on business and said to Mufti Sahib رحمه الله, "We have made du'aa to Allaah that we should have an Imaam like you in the Jaami Masjid of Randher." "How can someone like me be the Imaam in a place like Randher, which is the centre of learning and learned men?"

Not so long afterwards, the founder of Jaami Husayniyyah Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Husayn رحمه الله (student of Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Kifaayatullah رحمه الله) and the caretaker of the Daarul Uloom arrived in Nowsari to attend the Nikaah of Mufti Sahib رحمه الله 's sister. While there, they insisted on performing their Fajr salaah behind Mufti Sahib رحمه الله. After the salaah, Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Husayn رحمه الله embraced Mufti Sahib رحمه الله and said, "It is a place like the Jaami Masjid of Randher that deserves the likes of you." "But Randher is a centre of learning and I am just an ordinary Haafidh," Mufti Sahib رحمه الله submitted. "Just come to Randher," the two men insisted, "Inshaa Allaah, you will even graduate as an Aalim."

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله then proceeded to Randher, where he was appointed Imaam of the Jaami Masjid in Dhul Qa'dah 1343 A.H. (1925). There he served as Imaam for the following 63 years with great dedication and steadfastness, until he was forced to leave the post in 1406 A.H. due to ill health.

The people of Nowsari were extremely grieved by his departure, but gave him their du'aas when they realised that he left to study. When he arrived in Randher, he spent the night in the Masjid and was given food to eat the next morning in the Madrasah. When Mufti Sahib رحمه الله arrived in Randher, he was unable to eat the Madrasah food and took leave to prepare his own food. He would also sometimes buy food from a local restaurant, where food was very cheap. Things however became brighter when his wife was able to join him in Randher a while later.

It was in 1344 A.H. (1925) that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله enrolled in the Jaamia Husayniyyah (then called Madrasah Muhammadiyya Arabiyyah). There he studied for six years until he qualified on the 30th of Sha'baan 1349 A.H. (1930). The graduation ceremony was attended by great

luminaries like Hadhrat Moulana Anwar Shah Kashmeeri رحمه الله and Hadhrat Moulana Husayn Ahmad Madani رحمه الله. In fact, it was the hand of Hadhrat Shah Sahib رحمه الله that tied Mufti Sahib رحمه الله's turban at the graduation ceremony. When in Randher, Hadhrat Shah Sahib رحمه الله was asked to teach a few lessons, which he did. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله attended these lessons and was thus blessed with being the student of this great son of Islaam.

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله 's Ustaadhs include Hadhrat Moulana Muhibullaah رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Mahdi Hasan Shah Jahaanpuri رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Mahmood Hasan Ajmeri رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Husayn Randheri رحمه الله and Hadhrat Moulana Ahmad Noor Peshawari رحمه الله. All of these were great men of learning and all of them held Mufti Sahib رحمه الله in high esteem.

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله graduated as a Qaari as well. Although he learned under the expert tutelage of Qaari Abdus Sattaar رحمه الله in Lajpur, he studied all the books of Qiraa'ah and qualified as a Qaari under the skilled guidance of Qaari Muhammad Umar Thanwi رحمه الله at Jaamia Husayniyyah. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله recited the complete Qur'aan in *Hadr*, *Tadweer* and *Tarteel*.

The Beginning of his Career in Issuing Fataawaa

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله started writing Fataawaa during the latter years of his studies. It was the practice of Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Husayn رحمه الله to hand all questions over to Mufti Sahib رحمه الله for answering. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله would then reply to them after much research and then hand them back to Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Husayn رحمه الله for approval.

Teaching Career

After Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had completed his studies, he taught Tajweed at the Daarul Uloom for six months upon the instruction of his Ustaadh Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Husayn رحمه الله . Together with this, he also issued Fatwas. Despite the rector's insistence, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله refused to accept a salary and considered it an honour to serve the Daarul Uloom.

Thereafter, upon the request of the trustees of the *Anjuman Islaam* congregation of Randher, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله started to teach Hifdh and

Tajweed at their Madrasah. Here he taught for eight years and produced fifteen Huffaadh. Three of these were female, two of them still alive (one in Pakistan and one in Africa). Many of them were such proficient readers of the Qur'aan that they were often summoned to recite Qur'aan before large crowds in gatherings. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله also taught Tajweed for five years at the MMP school. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله would never accept remuneration for his teaching and would spend many hours apart from the fixed Madrasah hours on is students.

Teaching the Qur'aan

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله used to teach Tafseer of the Qur'aan in the Hirah Masjid daily after the Fajr salaah. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله and the people would sit with the Qur'aan open before them and Mufti Sahib رحمه الله would then recite and explain the meanings of the Aayaat. People would come from the neighbouring areas especially to listen to his Tafseer, which was neither too long nor too brief. In this manner, he completed the Tafseer of the Qur'aan in four and a half years.

Just as Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was greatly concerned about teaching children, he was also very concerned about the education of adults. It was therefore towards the last ten or more years if his life that he started lessons after Isha salaah. As a result of these classes, many people learnt to recite the Qur'aan with Tajweed.

Amongst the many students whom Mufti Sahib رحمه الله taught were Hadhrat Moulana Ahmadullaah the Sheikhul Hadith of Jaamia Husayniyyah Randher, Moulana Qaari Muhammad Noorgat, Moulana Qaari Ahmad Desai, Qaari Ibraheem Tickly, Moulana Muhammad Shareef Bukhari, Moulana Muhammad Haneef Afriqi, Qaari Ya'qoob Tinkarwi, Qaari Rasheed Ajmeri and many others.

Spiritual Reformation

With the grace of Allaah, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was blessed with piety and Taqwa from a young age, and this carried throughout his student life as well, as attested to by his report upon graduation. However, eager to have himself spiritually cleansed and to be able to drive maximum benefit from his knowledge, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله pledged allegiance at the hand of Hakeemul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله . When one of the trustees of the Jaamia Masjid of Randher was going to

meet Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله in Thanabowan, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله sent a letter with him, requesting for permission to pledge allegiance to him. The following abridged version of the reply gives one a clear indication of the status Mufti Sahib رحمه الله enjoyed amongst the Ulema. Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله wrote: "Moulana دامت بركاته … *As Salaamu Alaykum*. While there is no excuse for not being of service, I do not find myself worthy of being served. In fact, being of benefit does not even depend on this. The most important thing is to obey the injunctions (of Deen) and to seek advice. As for the injunctions, you know them better than I. As for seeking advice, I am prepared to offer it whenever you wish. *Was Salaam* … Ashraf Ali."

In fact, when the trustee delivered the letter to Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله, he also described Mufti Sahib رحمه الله. When Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله read Mufti Sahib رحمه الله 's letter requesting to pledge allegiance to him, he remarked, "There really is no need at all for such a person to pledge allegiance." When Hadhrat Moulana Husayn رحمه الله heard about this, he said to Mufti Sahib رحمه الله, "You have now have a qualification that even we do not have." Not much is known about the exchange of letters between Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله and Mufti Sahib رحمه الله thereafter.

When Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله passed away, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله pledged allegiance to Hadhrat Moulana Madani رحمه الله when he came to Randher. When Mufti Sahib رحمه الله completed the Adhkaar that Hadhrat Madani رحمه الله prescribed for him, he developed an intolerable headache. As soon as this was brought to the attention of Hadhrat Madani رحمه الله, he advised Mufti Sahib رحمه الله to do only as much as he could manage and to forego the rest.

Due to the strenuous and restricting nature of issuing Fataawaa and discharging the duties of an Imaam, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was unable to attend the gatherings of Hadhrat Madani رحمه الله.

When Hadhrat Madani رحمه الله passed away, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله pledged allegiance at the hand of Hadhrat Sheikh Muhammad Zakariyya رحمه الله. When Mufti Sahib رحمه الله and a few companions spend three days in Hadhrat Sheikh رحمه الله's Khanqah during Ramadhaan, Hadhrat Sheikh رحمه الله would ask for them when sitting down for meals, Hadhrat Sheikh رحمه الله also requested Mufti Sahib رحمه الله to lead the Fajr salaah.

Marriage and Children

It was while he was studying that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله married a lady named Faatima Begum, who was the daughter of Hadhrat Moulana Qaadhi Sayyid Abdul Hayy Lajpori رحمه الله. The marriage took place on the 27th of Rajab 1339 A.H. after Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had completed his Hifdh. From this union, Sayyid Ibraheem, Sayyid Abdullaah and Sayyida Haleema Begum were born. Sayyid Ibraheem was born one morning in the year 1341 A.H., but passed away the same evening. Sayyid Abdullaah was stillborn in 1343 A.H.

The Ahadeeth make it clear that those children who pass away before coming of age will cling to their parents on the Day of Qiyaamah and will refuse to leave them until they are entered into Jannah. May Allaah make these children also a source of salvation for Mufti Sahib رحمه الله . Aameen.

Sayyida Haleema married Moulana Sayyid Qaadhi Muhiyuddeen رحمه الله, who taught for 51 years in Daarul Uloom Ashrafiyya.

Demise of his Beloved Wife

Several books such as *Ahsanul Fataawaa* (Vol.4 Pg.197), *Khayrul Fataawaa* (Vol.3 Pg.106) and *Fataawaa Mahmoodiyyah* (Vol.11 Pg.90) all state that the Muslim who passes away in Ramadhaan will be saved from the punishment of the grave. Fortunate indeed was the beloved wife of Mufti Sahib رحمه الله who passed away on the 22nd of Ramadhaan 1348 A.H., after just 9 years of marriage.

His Travels for Hajj and Umrah

Allaah blessed Mufti Sahib رحمه الله with the opportunity of visiting the two Harams on three occasions. The first journey for Hajj took place in 1962, when Mufti Sahib رحمه الله travelled with his father Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Abdul Kareem رحمه الله and his sister. They travelled by ship from Bombay and reached Jeddah in eight days. During the Hajj journey, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله recited the Talbiya excessively and wept a lot.

Although Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was then 60 years of age, he visited all the blessed sites during the journey and even climbed up Jabal Thowr, which stand at a height of 759 m. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله also went into the

cave of Hira, where he ensured that he entered in a manner that his chest brushed against the rocks because he was told by a saint of Deoband that this was how Rasulullaah ρ entered the cave.

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله undertook the second journey for Hajj in 1969 as Hajj Badal. However, because his ship was delayed, there was no accommodation available when he reached Makkah, even though a room had been reserved for him at the India House. Not knowing who Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was, the Mu'allim's agent told him that the only available place to sleep was a bathroom, which was large enough for him and another person. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله therefore shared the bathroom with someone else. This incident speaks volumes of his simplicity and unassuming nature.

When he had completed the Rites of Hajj, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله joked with the Mu'allim saying, "Until now I was fit to stay only in the bathroom, but can you not arrange a better place for me now that I have returned cleansed from Arafaat?" Now that it came to the attention of the Mu'allim that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had been staying in the bathroom, he reprimanded his agent sternly for treating Mufti Sahib رحمه الله as he did. He then arranged for Mufti Sahib رحمه الله to stay in an upmarket apartment. Hadhrat Moulana Yusuf Binori رحمه الله was also straying at this apartment and Mufti Sahib رحمه الله therefore met him often.

Because Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had developed a relationship with the men drawing water from the Zam Zam well, they permitted him to draw water for himself, thereby giving Mufti Sahib رحمه الله the opportunity to practice on a Sunnah of Rasulullaah ρ.

It was then in 1978 that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had the good fortune of visiting the holy lands yet again. This time, he performed Umrah. He left from England with Hadhrat Moulana Ajmeri رحمه الله at the end of Sha'baan and they stayed for twelve days. He stayed as a guest of Hadhrat Sheikhul Hadith Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya رحمه الله in Madinah at the Madrasah Uloom Shari'ah.

Trip to England

The Muslims of England have enjoyed the good fortune of hosting a large number of great Ulema. Although he never travelled abroad for any purpose other than Hajj and Umrah, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله travelled to England in 1978 with Moulana Sayyid Abraar Ahmad رحمه الله . Upon arrival

in London, they proceeded straight to Dewsbury, where they attended a Tablighi Ijtima. Thereafter, they travelled to several places, but it was mostly Moulana Abraar Ahmad رحمه الله and Moulana Muhammad Ridhaa Ajmeri رحمه الله who delivered the lectures. Upon invitation, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله chaired a special meeting to discuss the sighting of the moon. His visit had a great impact upon the people of England and they cherished memories of the visit for years to come. It was after this visit that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله left for Umrah.

The Opening of Madrasah Raheemiyyah

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله always entertained a great passion for the Qur'aan and would happily agree to listen to the revision of Huffaadh when the Daarul Ulooms requested him to do so. He was returning from Jannatul Baqee in Madinah one day when a person came up to him and said, "Make an effort to teach the Qur'aan to children and establish Madrasahs for this." After saying just this, the man then left as suddenly as he had appeared.

People then started to flock around Mufti Sahib رحمه الله to ask whether he recognised the man. When Mufti Sahib رحمه الله admitted that he did not know him, the people told him that the man was amongst the elusive men of the unseen whom Allaah occasionally sent to guide people. They are not seen for years.

When Mufti Sahib رحمه الله returned from Hajj, he received a letter from a man in England stating that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله should go ahead and establish a Madrasah, which the man was willing to fund. It was then in the year 1971 that Madrasah Raheemiyyah was established in Randher to teach children how to recite the Qur'aan and to learn other Deeni subjects. A Hifdh class was also started. With the grace of Allaah, a large number of children have benefited tremendously from things Madrasah.

Outstanding Character Traits

Together with the blessing of belonging to the noble family of Rasulullaah ρ, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was endowed with many exemplary qualities. He possessed tremendous knowledge, was pious, far-sighted, tolerant, humble, high-minded, entertaining, meticulous about the Sunnah, resolute and with a keen sense of responsibility.

It has always been the trait of out pious predecessors to admit their errors and then change their opinion accordingly when they were wrong about any Fatwa that they issued. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله did the same when it occurred to him, as will be noticed in the issue concerning the performance of the Janaazah salaah in the graveyard.

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was always entertaining the many guests that came to him from far and wide and would insist that people join him in his meals. When anyone even came homes to ask a question, the person would to be allowed to leave without at least having a cup of tea. People from out of town would have to join him for a meal. He would also never send anyone away empty handed when asked for something, as was the habit of Rasulullaah ρ. In fact, his every action exuded the Sunnah of Rasulullaah ρ and he actively refuted acts of Bid'ah since such acts contradicted the Sunnah. Many of his Fataawaa bear testimony to this.

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was also a stalwart when it came to the pious predecessors, especially those aligned to Deoband. Several of his Fataawaa provide detailed replies to the slander levelled against the Ulema of Deoband, one such reply falling under the heading of "*Misleading propaganda of those devoted to Ridha Khan and directed against the Ulema of Deoband and the Tablighi Jamaa'ah*".

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله always concerned himself with eradicated any new misguided challenge to the Deen and would also direct the attention of other Ulema to these whenever he met with them. Amongst these challenges was the influence of the Western culture upon the Muslims and the challenge of the Ghayr Muqallideen. These issues have been addressed in great detail in his Fataawaa.

When the Jamaa'ate Islaami started to gain a foothold in Surat and were on the verge of opening and office there, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله elucidated their deviate nature to the Ulema of the area. In a united effort, these Ulema then managed to weed out this deviant group from their midst. Acting upon the guidance of senior Ulema, they then started a committee called *Majlis Tahaffudhil Islaam* (Committee for the protection of Islaam). Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was unanimously selected to be the head of the committee. He then wrote a few booklets addressing this issue, which have been printed in the *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah*. These fall under the headings of:

1. Criticising the Ambiyaa عليهم السلام and the Sahabah ψ in the Light of the Qur'aan, the Ahadeeth and the Words of the Pious Predecessors

2. The Sahabah ψ are a Criterion for What is Right and Wrong

3. The Status of Commenting on the Qur'aan on the Basis of one's Opinion

Ameer of Shari'ah

When the need arose to select an Ameer of Shari'ah for the Gujarat province in India, everyone looked to Mufti Sahib رحمه الله to grace the position. He, however, declined the post because of his advanced age and many other engagements. However, the Ulema insisted that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله assume the post, which he eventually did.

The Ummah often turned to Mufti Sahib رحمه الله for guidance when they most needed it and Allaah took great services from his pen in this regard.

As stated earlier, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله paid specific attention to educating children and often wrote about its importance. *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah* contains several discussions in the regard. One such discussion appears under the heading "*The Responsibility of Depriving Children of Deeni Education is the Parent's*".

When the people of Surat were afflicted with a plague and erroneous beliefs started to spread, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله corrected the situation when he issued a Fatwa under the heading "*The Islaamic Ruling Regarding Plagues*". When the incident of the demolition of the Barbari Masjid took place, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله pointed the way forward to the Muslims in his Fatwa titled "*The Reasons and Solutions for Divine Calamities*".

These Fataawaa were published in Gujarati and English as well and are just as few of the many examples that can be cited.

Because of these and so many other attributes, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was greatly revered by the leading Ulema of his time, who would always stop by to meet him when they came to Surat and Randher. Amongst these great sages were Hadhrat Mufti Mahmoodul Hasan Gangohi رحمه الله,

Hadhrat Maseehul Ummah Hadhrat Moulana Maseehullaah رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Manzoor Nu'maani رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Abdul Haleem Jonpuri رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Qaari Siddeeq Ahmad Bandwi رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Imraan Khan Bopali رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Shah Abraarul Haq دامت بركاته, Hadhrat Moulana Asad Madani رحمه الله, Hadhrat Moulana Qamaruz Zamaan دامت بركاته, Hadhrat Moulana Ibraheem Dewla دامت بركاته, Hadhrat Moulana Ahmad Laat دامت بركاته, etc, etc.

Fataawaa Raheemiyyah

The Fataawaa that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله issued were published in a Gujarati monthly for twelve years. These were then compiled and printed in book form in two volumes and titled *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah*. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله 's father Hadhrat Moulana Abdul Kareem رحمه الله and Munshi Isa Bhai applied themselves tremendously to the task of compilation and arranging the Fataawaa into chapters.

There was, however, the need to translate these Fataawaa into Urdu. Since Mufti Sahib رحمه الله did not have the time for this, the daunting task was entrusted to Moulana Qaari Noor Muhammad Patel Hathori, Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Ahmad Khanpuri and Moulana Wali Ahmad Satponi. These two volumes were then edited by Moulana Sayyid Mia Sahib, the Sheikhul Hadith of Madrasah Ameeniyyah in Delhi.

Unique Feature of Fataawaa Raheemiyyah

Fataawaa Raheemiyyah is unique amongst all the compilations of Fataawaa from the Indo-Pak subcontinent in that it is the only one that is to be found in Urdu, Gujarati and English. Insha Allaah, it will soon also be completed in Arabic.

Hereunder follows excerpts from what some eminent Ulema have said about *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah*:

1. Mufakkir Islaam Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمه الله: "For this (guiding the Ummah in their day-to-day matters), one needs to possess a strong proficiency in Fiqh, a deep insight into details and an understanding of the principles of Fiqh as good as those who teach it. Taqwa, caution, fear of Allaah, a strong sense of responsibility and attachment to the pious predecessors is also very necessary. It is only those people who understand the difficulties of

this path and who are attached to the Hanafi Madh'hab who will be able to appreciate the value of *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah*. Such people will be able to testify to the fact that Allaah has truly blessed the well-qualified author with all the qualities required to render this delicate task in these times."

2. Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Mahdi Hasan رحمه الله: "Not only is *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah* beneficial for the public, but also very beneficial for the Ulema …. In short, *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah* can be relied on by any measure used."
3. Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Manzoor Nu'maani رحمه الله: "I have no knowledge of any other compilation of Fataawaa in which every question is as well researched and detailed as this ... I have benefited tremendously through it…"
4. Hadhrat Moulana Habeebur Rahmaan A'zami رحمه الله: "Mashaa Allaah, he (Hadhrat Mufti Lajpuri رحمه الله) has replied to the questions with great research and depth and in a manner that puts the heart at ease."
5. Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Nizaamud Deen رحمه الله: "Hadhrat's Fataawaa are extremely well substantiated and researched and are a true interpretation of the truth. They are enormously beneficial to both the public as well as the Ulema."

Apart from these leading Ulema, there are dozens more who have endorsed *Fataawaa Raheemiyyah* in the highest regard.

The Fataawaa appearing herein are regularly published in parts in numerous magazines and newspapers and have always been published from the time Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had been issuing Fataawaa.

Correctness of Judgement and Accuracy of his Fataawaa

It has happened several times that certain Ulema have dissented from some of his Fataawaa but, ultimately, when these had been submitted for review to the Indian centres of learning, they have been confirmed by high-ranking divines. Of such, only two examples which have certain historical importance will suffice to prove the accuracy of his judgement :

(1) A noted and respectable Haaji of Rander died in 1351 A.H., leaving behind his second wife and the children of his deceased first wife. In consultation with certain Ulema he had also left a will which, besides other things, mentioned that he did not want to take his share from the legacy of his deceased wife ("I do not want to claim the share which I have a right to from my deceased wife's legacy").

After the Haaji's death, the question arose as to whether his legal share in the property of his deceased wife should be included in his own legacy or not. The widow (second wife) claimed a one-eighth share from that share, but the children of the deceased wife were not, on account of the Haaji's will, prepared to recognise this claim, contending that the Haaji had forfeited his claim by writing "I do not want to claim...".

When this problem was submitted to the Mufti Sahib, his verdict was as follows:

"By the writing "I do not want to claim…" the deceased Haaji's claim did not lapse. Rather, he still retains a right to his share and the second wife also has a right to claim the one-eighth part from it. Indeed, if the Haaji had written that he gave his share to such and such a person, then his claim would have certainly lapsed and the person to whom he had given it or gifted it to would have become the legatee."

Certain notable Ulema objected to this Fatwa and the case was referred to Allaama Moulana Mufti Muhammad Kifaayatullaah رحمه الله the Chief Mufti of India, who was then a (political) prisoner in the New Central Jail at Multan. The Allaama wrote back, saying, “The Haaji's claim certainly did not lapse. He is, according to custom, owner of his right and the second wife shall receive a one-eighth part of it.”

As a result of this confirmation of his opinion by the highest authority in the country, the dissenting Mufti's respect and confidence in Mufti Abdur Raheem Sahib's jurisprudential acumen increased so much that he would never issue a Fatwa without first showing it to him.

(2) In 1936, when the Minara Masjid in Rander was being reconstructed, its trustee Haaji Banu, inquired of the Mufti Sahib about the laying of the sewage drain-pipe. The Mufti Sahib inspected the site and permitted the Mutawalli to go ahead with the construction work.

The nature of the question can be known from the Mufti Sahib's answer
: '

"Answer: The site of the well into which the sewage drain-pipe is to be introduced is well outside the Masjid's courtyard. Although obligatory and Sunnah prayers are temporarily held at this site until the completion of the Masjid, this site does not fall within the order of a proper Masjid. It is therefore permissible, as per necessity, for the sewage drain-pipe to be introduced into this disused well. This will not be sacrilegious to the Masjid."

The trustee then laid the drainpipe on the strength of this Fatwa. However, some people later objected and called another local Mufti. They showed him the site and obtained a Fatwa from him, stating that the act was not permissible. This was then published in the *Hamdard* newspaper. As soon as this Fatwa was published in the said newspaper, readers from all over began to shower scorn and reproach on Mufti Sahib. Alarmed by this, the trustee rushed to Mufti Sahib and related to him the story of the publication of dissenting Fatwa and the readers' reaction. He expressed his desire to remove the pipe on which he had spent a large sum of money. Unperturbed, Mufti Sahib consoled and reassured the ruffled trustee about the correctness of his own Fatwa. To make doubly sure, he asked the trustee to prepare a map of the site to be sent to Delhi and other centres for reference and confirmation. This was done and the following answer was received from Delhi:

"Answer: *It is incorrect to state that a site which happens to be within the boundary of the Masjid has the order of a Masjid. It is also incorrect to state that a site which, out of necessity, is temporarily being used for prayers has become a Masjid. In the said situation, laying the sewage pipe up to the Masjid will be permissible if no other loss or damage is caused by the laying and there is also no harm if the congregational prayers have to be temporarily held on it.*

Sayyid Muhammad Kifayatullaah,
Darul Ifta, Madraasah Aminiyah, Delhi."

In this connection, a reference was also made to Mufti Mahdi Hasan Sahib. The question and answer are reproduced below:

"Question: *What do the Ulema of Deen and the Muftis have to say about the following:*

A small plot of land at our place happens to be within the boundary of the Masjid. However, on one side of its courtyard, adjacent to the water-tank, there had been a bathroom and a well, but the bath-room was shifted to another place a few years ago and the well was filled up with earth. The ground was levelled and a masonry floor was constructed upon it. Now people sit on this floor and, without any qualms, they talk about worldly matters and even smoke. At times, some of them even perform their Sunnah and Nafl salaah there. For awhile, the five time congregational prayers, too, had been held on this floor because the Masjid had been pulled down for reconstruction and there was no space for salaah in the courtyard of the Masjid. For the good of the Masjid and to save the Masjid money, I have laid a drainpipe at a depth of two men's height for draining sewage to the said disused well. The pipe will carry sewage from the new toilets, which are adjacent to the shoe space within the compound of the Masjid. This I did in the belief that the levelled well is well outside the Masjid proper. The deep ditch for laying the pipe has been firmly filled up with earth so that there is no possibility of the stench leaking out. Some people think that since this well is situated within the boundary of the Masjid, it is within the Masjid and the hard floor on it is in the order of the courtyard of the Masjid, particularly because Sunnah and Nafl salaahs are being performed here and because the obligatory salaahs had been performed on it for a fairly long time. They therefore aver that it is sacrilegious to the Masjid to drain sewage into this well. Is this correct? It is hoped that after examining the map of the Masjid (attached herewith), you will advise me about the legal regulation. It may be kept in mind that the said well is very deep and is situated near a river. The rise and fall in the water-level of the river will draw out the sewage and there is hence no fear of the well brimming over. It is also necessary to note that if this septic-well is cancelled, the government will not permit the digging of another, since it has prohibited the digging of wells which may be more than 20 feet in depth. Hence, it is quite probable that a new septic well (of less than 20 feet of depth) will fill up again and again and will thereby cause inconvenience to the people praying. It will inevitably also result in recurring expenses (for cleansing) for this Masjid, which really has little means. However, should the presence of this drainpipe be sacrilegious to the Masjid, we shall bear all expenses (to remove it).

<u>Answer:</u> *There is a piece of land called the courtyard of the Masjid and there is another which as called the precinct of the Masjid. Normally, the space lying within the boundary of the Masjid consists of the Masjid*

proper, the Masjid-courtyard and the Masjid precinct, etc. Thus, although the bath room, water-closet, water tank, ablution area, shoe-space, space for water-pots and Masjid furniture, etc. are all situated within the boundary of the Masjid, the legal regulations of the Masjid proper are not applicable to them. As much space as happens to be outside the legal limit of the Masjid proper, is not Masjid but is meant for the maintenance and requirements of the Masjid. However, if the residents of the locality (the founder, the real owner) annex some fallow land in order to extend the area of the Masjid, that plot of land too will become Masjid. The land (in the question) from which the drain-pipe has been laid to reach the septic-well, as it appears from the attached map of the Masjid is outside the legal limit of the Masjid and happens to lie in the precinct of the Masjid. It has had no connection whatsoever with the courtyard of the Masjid. The courtyard of the Masjid which is in the order of a Masjid according to the jurists, is that courtyard which is an open space and which is also called the summer-Masjid or the external Masjid. The place where shoes are taken off, the place where the septic-well has been constructed and the places where bathroom and toilets have been built are all outside the courtyard of the Masjid. Hence there is no fault in laying that pipe up to the well. It is not sacrilegious to the Masjid since there is nothing in it to pollute or contaminate the Masjid with filth, because all this space, as per the said map, is external to the Masjid proper. That is why people sit there to gossip, smoke, and as stated in the question, there was also a bathroom there. Performing Nafl prayers at a place does not make it a Masjid. Similarly, a place does not also become a Masjid if obligatory prayers are performed there for one reason or another when the intention is already made when the reason disappears, the place will no longer be used for this purpose. It is stated in the question that because the Masjid had been pulled down for reconstruction and there was no space either in the Masjid proper or its courtyard for hosting the salaah, which was done. Then, when the Masjid was rebuilt, this place was given up. In such a case, the regulations concerning a Masjid are not applicable to it and the place is not a Masjid.[1]

Besides the map, I have also seen the place. The said well and the pipe lie in the precinct of the Masjid, which is outside the Masjid proper and not even inside the Masjid courtyard, so as to make their presence impermissible.

Sayyid Mahdi Hasan, Mufti of Rander.

[1] *Bahrur Raa'iq* (Vol.5 Pg.248), *Durrul Mukhtaar* with *Shaami* (Vol.3 Pg.395).

Surat, dated Feb. 19, 1936.

This answer has been corroborated by the following religious and legal luminaries:

1. *Muhammad Badre Aalam*
2. *Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani*
3. *Moulana Ashraf Ali*
4. *Zafar Ahmad and Abdul Kareem, Khanqah e Imdadadiyyah, Thana Bhowan*
5. *Isma'eel bin Muhammad Bismillah, Jamia Islaamiyyah, Dhabel, Surat*
6. *Ahmed Nur, Jamia Husaynniyah, Rander*
7. *Abdur Rahmaan"*

More About His Life

Being the Imaam of the largest Masjid in Randher for 65 years, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was in touch with everything that was happening in and around the community. There were a host of innovations and erroneous practice that the Muslims were steeped in. However, there now remains no traces of these amongst the people of the area.

Since it was the practice of Rasulullaah ρ to dress in special attire for the day of Jumu'ah, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله followed suit and would always do the same. He liked wearing a black turban for the occasion.

When he was healthy and well, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله always ensured that he never leaned back and ate anything since Rasulullaah ρ forbade this. Eventually, when he became very ill in his old age, observers noticed that when he even took his medication, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله ensured that he sat up without leaning against anything.

When eclipses occurred, he led the people in the special salaah for the occasion and would recite the *Qunoot Naazila* whenever a calamity befell the Ummah, even when it did not directly affect the people of Randher. He always sat in I'tikaaf for the last ten days of Ramadhaan. In fact, when he arrived in Randher, people knew nothing of I'tikaaf and were even surprised to see someone spending a night in the Masjid without fearing the Jinn. With Allaah's help, a time soon came when the Masjid would be full with people sitting in I'tikaaf.

While in I'tikaaf, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله would rise at three in the morning, perform his Tahajjud salaah and then engage in lengthy du'aa. He then ate Sehri, which usually consisted of half a *Chapati* (thin unleavened bread) and some soup. He then prepared for the Fajr salaah, after which he rested. He would again rise at nine, when he would listen to the Huffadh revising the Qur'aan. This continues until eleven, when he would busy himself in Fataawaa. He would often send for books from home for research. After Zuhr, he attended to his mail and then rested until Asr. The time between Asr and Maghrib was again spent listening to the Huffadh and making a long du'aa before Adhaan. Iftaar and the Maghrib salaah then followed, after which Mufti Sahib رحمه الله would perform lengthy Awwaabeen salaah. He then had just enough time for a cup of tea, his medication and preparation for salaah. He corrected the Huffadh in the Taraaweeh salaah and when the salaah was over, he joined the people in listening to Hadhrat Ajmeri رحمه الله's Tafseer of the Qur'aan. Thereafter, he joined the other people in I'tikaaf when they ate some fruit and his *Majlis* then took place until people started to leave the Masjid. He then prepared for salaah, saying, "Now to relish my Nafl salaah." He then engaged himself in salaah from about eleven until half past twelve, made a long du'aa again and then went to sleep.

He started the I'tikaaf with the intention to lead the Janaazah salaah should it need to be performed. When the Janaazah was ready and the people had already formed their rows, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله would immediately perform the salaah and then return to the Masjid immediately thereafter. When Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله was asked about this on one occasion, he endorsed the act as being correct.

On one occasion when people insisted that he make a du'aa after the Eid Khutbah, he said to them, "Du'aa is made for Allaah and if this is what you want, I have already made it after the salaah. Otherwise, if you wish that the du'aa be made for show, then you may lift your hands and I shall make du'aa until Zuhr." No one stayed on.

As was the practice of Rasulullaah ρ in the early years, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله also engaged in trade when he arrived in Randher. While he spent the mornings in replying to questions, listening to Qur'aan, etc, he used the afternoons to sell *Itr*, *Tasbeehs* and other items.

When he sensed the need for people to know about any issue, he would gather them together after salaah and then explain it to them.

In this way, many of improper acts that he noticed amongst the people were corrected.

He always performed Tahajjud salaah for years and would perform lengthy Rakaahs with long du'aa afterwards. Thereafter, he recited the Qur'aan and performed the two Sunnah Rakaahs of Fajr at home before proceeding to the Masjid. This was also according to the Sunnah of Rasulullaah ρ. In fact, his entire life was moulded in the cast of the Sunnah. He even stuck tacitly to the Sunnah practices during his illness, when many such acts were extremely difficult.

His Ailing Health

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله underwent a hernia operation and also had to have kidney stones removed and spent many days in hospital. He was also involved in an accident, which caused him to suffer a fractured shoulder. As a result of these and other diseases suffered during his early years, his health started to fail towards the end of his life. However, despite all of this, he still insisted to remain active and independent as far as was possible. Mufti Sahib رحمه الله was, however, forced to remain in bed several years before he passed away.

It was on the 9th of Sha'baan 1422 that Mufti Sahib رحمه الله started to experience very high fever. His dedicated doctor of 25 years Hadhrat Abu Dharr τ. Yusuf Patel was immediately summoned and he administered an injection to divert the fever from the brain. Although he was extremely weak, Mufti Sahib رحمه الله still performed Tayammum and performed his Isha salaah and remained conscious and alert. He was, however, unable to eat anything.

Although he was extremely ill when Ramadhaan started, he followed some friends in the Taraaweeh salaah while lying in bed. This he did for two nights. The following day, he was unable to even reply to people greeting him. A youngster was reciting Qur'aan by his bedside when Mufti Sahib رحمه الله started to recite the Kalimah. He had barely completed reciting when he sighed and passed away. It was twenty-five past twelve at the time.

When the doctor was summoned, he examined Mufti Sahib رحمه الله. His eyes then filled with tears when he confirmed that the great soul had finally left to meet its Creator.

Mufti Sahib رحمه الله had made a bequest for a thick, black sheet to be used to cover his body when it was bathed, which was done. He had his Kafan ready beforehand and the body was ready for burial by half past three. People then got the opportunity to soothe their eyes with his sight until Asr and, according to his request, no non-Mahram was allowed to see him.

The Janaazah started to leave his house at nine, but because of the large crowd, it only left at eleven. The Janaazah salaah had to be performed in a large field, which was filled with people and was led by Mufti Aarif Hasan Sahib, according to Mufti Sahib رحمه الله's request. All the people present smelt the wonderful fragrance that wafted from Mufti Sahib رحمه الله 's grave. May Allaah elevate his stages and keep him in safety throughout the journey to the Aakhirah. Aameen.